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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9512
INFO RUEHIK/AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI 1355
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ATHENS 001261

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STATE FOR EUR/SE GCOWAN; EUR/PPD KGIUSTI; JRICKERT; MOKEEFE; LDAVIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ATHENS MARSHALL PLAN EVENT BRINGS BACK POSITIVE MEMORIES,
MAINLY POSITIVE PRESS

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Summary

1. On June 11, 2007, U.S. Embassy Athens hosted a gala reception in honor of the 60th Anniversary of the Marshall Plan at the residence of U.S. Ambassador Charles P. Ries. Over 300 guests came to celebrate the Marshall Plan and its contributions to rebuilding Greece after World War II and the Greek Civil War. Former Prime Minister Constantinos Mitsotakis, the U&S" QQ%#)!\$ E&2%Q "12 Qudan Andrew Natsios, a*\$ Ub\$%QQeaQ%QaRQ !" ST!Te for Political Affairs R.QQ B)!had!Q BUQ"Q !ave speeches. The event WaQ Qide,Q !)QeR%\$ bI docal press outlets, both QQibQ !jd Q%deRiQ)eb\$ and instigated a proDUaQ)Qe\$ ()ah%QQ!fid% \$iAcussion on the Marshall QQ!" %Q)"QQ CQ%%\$" Ebd Summary.

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Reception Activities and Program

2. U.S. Embassy Athens planned a June 11 reception as the kick-off event in a series of programs designed to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Marshall Plan. The 300 guests included an elite group of top politicians, including Finance Minister George Alogoskoufis and Minister of Public Order Vyron Polydoros, business leaders, artists and writers, and Greek-American organizations. Journalists and camera crews from all major local media also attended.

3. As guests walked in to the reception, they were given full-color information booklets about the Marshall Plan and its implementation in Greece. This information was also available on our website. Once they passed through the receiving line, they were shown inside the Residence where a series of short documentaries on the Marshall Plan was playing on a continuous loop, and on the veranda they saw a 12-panel paper show on the Marshall Plan in Greece, produced by the Embassy's PA section in coordination with the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Speakers

4. The formal program began with remarks by U.S. Ambassador Charles Ries, who introduced the three speakers. The full text of all speeches is available on the U.S. Embassy website:
http://athens.usembassy.gov/relations/marshall_commemoration.htm.

5. The first speaker, Honorary President of the New Democracy party

(ruling party) and Former Prime Minister Constantinos Mitsotakis spoke from experience about the Marshall Plan in Greece. He said, "If Greece had not been the recipient of the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine, it is certain that the civil war would have been lost."

¶6. The President's Special Envoy for Sudan and former Administrator of USAID Andrew Natsios affirmed that in implementing their programs, George Marshall and Harry Truman "were creating the US government's modern foreign assistance program."

¶7. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs R. Nicholas Burns spoke last on the affect of the Marshall Plan on U.S.-Greece bilateral relations. He called Greece the object of the "beginning" of the Marshall Plan and Truman Doctrine, and he emphasized the cooperation between our countries born at that time: "We accomplished all these things not because the American people did this but because Greek people rose up and won their own peace and built their own democratic state."

Press Coverage

¶8. Greece is known as the most anti-American country in Europe. Protests often start or end in front of the U.S. Embassy with angry chants and Molotov cocktails. Twice, a statue of Harry Truman has been knocked down. Consequently, one of the event's most impressive results was to spark debate on this period, both objective and subjective, in a wide-range of media outlets.

¶9. The Sunday (June 17, 2007) To Vima (center-left, circ. 193,000) published an editorial entitled "Marshall Plan Memories," where former PASOK party Minister George Romeos called "the prevention of a communist victory" in the Greek Civil War "the collateral gain of U.S. strategy at the time."

¶10. Centrist daily Kathimerini (circ. 136,000) published a Sunday
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interview (June 17, 2007) with James Warren, a leader in the U.S. Economic Mission that implemented Marshall Plan assistance in Greece. Warren said "...throughout its implementation, the U.S. was 'for Greeks,' the country that saved Greece."

¶11. Express, a respected, economic daily (circ. 30,000), printed a positive op-ed asking Greeks to reconsider actions like tearing down the statue of an American leader and to remember "the choices of another America, the one of Truman, Marshall, Kennedy, and so many others."

¶12. Of course, it wouldn't be Greece without a few negative remarks. The Greek Communist Party issued a harsh critique of Mitsotakis, which was covered in the press.

Comment

¶13. U.S. Embassy Athens's Marshall Plan reception provided an opportunity for a broad range of Greek elites to rethink the Marshall Plan years and the long history of cooperation and assistance between the U.S. and Greece. In a pre-election climate, the fact that op-eds in some highly respected papers actually discussed the Marshall Plan itself and its meaning for Greece's development was an extremely positive result.

COUNTRYMAN